DIFFERENT ORIGINS OF ORIENTAL TYPE
SETTLEMENTS OF IN SERBIA

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INTRODUCTION - RESEARCH METHODS AND THE BASIC COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Listing the facts about architecture, actually about the buildings, despite the difficulties, which we may encounter, has nonetheless its reasonable and logical course. The search for the origin, foundation and development of some settlement is far more complex than a mere explanation of how a roof had looked like in a past period. This is the reason why these explorations cannot focus solely on the determination of the physical remnants. The material traces do not offer the insight into numerous other spiritual, non-material characteristics that create a settlement as a whole.¹

This phase can be especially applied to the knowledge of Byzantine settlements while there is a slightly better case with our knowledge of the settlements of the oriental type.² In both cases, the classic description of investigation refers to some individual settlements grows through time and becomes part of the urban planning history. It is rarely that type morphology is used for acquisition of data about some settlement, though this is a method, which offers a very appropriate approach to the urban forms. The comprehensives of the type morphology lies in its complexity and capability of clarifying simultaneously the physical and spatial structure of a settlement. The description of the urban form (morphology) is based on its elaborated classification of building types and open spaces (typology), so the type morphology, as a complex discipline is exploring the urban forms through styding of the spatial types and buildings themselves. As to the other methods, it is possible to distinguish tree types, which are at the same time the main characteristics of type morphology.

First, the type applied in type morphology combines volumetric characteristics of built structure with open spaces adequate to them in order to define the type of the built landscape.

Secondly, by including the site and through the character of its division as a constituent element in the typology of forms, the site becomes the link between one building and the proportion of a city.

Thirdly, the built landscape is not a morphological unit, but a morphy-genetic unit because it is defined by time; the time in which the settlement was founded, developed, used or changed.

This short explanation should point to the complexity of styding the similarities and differences between those elements in the development of the existing and the appearance of new settlements during the period of Turkish conquer in the territory which used to form the medieval Serbian State.

BASIC ORIENTAL TYPE SETTLEMENTS ORIGINS IN SERBIA

The basic morphological insight into the settlements in medieval Serbia is given in some segments of the book "Housing in Medieval Serbia", written by G. Milosevic.³ The data given here, combined with additional facts for some settlements, represent exquisite material for creating a synthetic picture about an urban landscape of Serbia prior to the gradual Turkish conquer. According to the above author, throughout that period, there were rural settlements, as well as fortified sites and suburb belts, markets-non-fortified urban settlements, capitals of the rulers, major economic centres and monastery complexes. The character of this division partially follows the existing efforts for systematisation of the knowledge acquired about Byzantium settlements, such as was the attempt of H. Buras in 1980.⁴

The settlement types in the territory of medieval Serbia and their formal characteristics in the 15th century represented the result of a very long and multilayered process of settlement transformation which covered the period from the breakdown of the Roman Empire until the fall of Byzantium. Over this more than one thousand years' long period the anti urban planning, which served as an ideological standpoint and as a model, had undergone numerous transformations. Therefore in the 15th century settlements the antiqu model it can only be anticipated. Unlike these forms, the oriental type settlements, which had begun to emerge soon after Turkish conquering of these territories have a different development course. In short, in mid-7th century, the Arabs had conquered the Mediterranean coasts where most urban zones of the Hellenistic East were settled and managed to adapt them to their way of life. All towns were very similar (from Atlantic to India)

² N.K. Mucopulos, "O vizantijskom i neovizantijskom gradu", Arheologija 64, 1997, 29-65. (in greek)
and had preserved their structure to these days. They had kept one of the basic characteristics of the antic urban planning - division into zones within the enclosed units. Besides, the simplicity of the new social order, which was mainly based on Koran, greatly simplified the human relations. That is why these towns lost the complexity of the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine towns. There were no forums, basilicas, theatres, amphitheatres, stadiums and gymnasiuums anymore. There were only housing structures (houses), sacrals buildings (mosques), and public structures (hans, caravanserais, and hammams). Apart from the elementary religious structures, all other structures were built according to the needs and number of inhabitants of the town.

The oriental type towns mainly consist of two different urban structures, of different size; commercial and trade centre (charshia) and housing quarters (mahalas). The concentration of commercial buildings is the essential symbol of the economic life of these cities. Unlike, the medieval cities were founded under strong Byzantine influence and allowed housing and commercial structures to be mixed, e.g. construction of buildings with trade workshops and dwelling apartments on the floor above. Something like this was not possible to achieve in a oriental town type due to the religious principles and restrictions. For instance, in the late period, after 11th century, parts of towns inhabited by Christian Orthodox could be recognised exactly thanks to the fact that there was a flat above the commercial and trading ground floor.

It is believed that Turkish tribes that acquired Islamic religion and settled in the greater part of the great ex-Byzantium, encountering the civilisation accepted and adjusted certain urban planning forms to their needs. The apparently spontaneously created street tissue with winding streets and dead-ends is very characteristic both for late Byzantine types and oriental city types. The grouping of trades and commercial according to certain specific points related to semi-detached buildings is characteristic for both Buzanthium and Islamic urban planning. Location of the industry outside the medieval town fortifications can be compared to the locating of industrial zones in the outskirts of Islamic towns.

Even though it is not quite clear if there were any square places and what they looked like in Byzantine towns, it is certainly sure that there weren't any in the oriental type towns because in these towns any mass gathering of people were forbidden. The same refers to the rented housing strikers that existed in the medieval settlements in the Balkans, but which ceased to be constructed during the Turkish rule. In the medieval settlements it was not always necessary for a church to stand out for its monumentality, but in the oriental type towns the juma-mosque (in which Friday prayers were held) had to be easily recognisable.

However, the main difference can be seen in the choice of the location of the settlement. For medieval settlements it was a rule to choose places which were not easily accessible, even in cases of villages and marketplaces. The new settlements constructed during the Turkish rule were situated in the plains, alongside communications. Very often these were settlements of the open type.

Settlement types with oriental characteristics in Serbia

The Turkish conquering of the Balkans imposed deep changes to the position, nature and role of the towns in this region. Major changes could be felt until to 16th century. At that time the Balkans had become part of a unique state and economic area in which the settlements developed diversely:

- by reconstruction and further development of the model of the conquered town;
- by adaptation of the existing model which was adjusted to the requirements of the oriental way of life;
- by bridging or linking of two different not distanced towns entities;
- by formation of a completely new settlement.

Reconstruction and Further Development of Conquered Settlements

Let us examine the first type. The example is Novo Brdo. Novo Brdo was, undeniably, one of the most significant and greatest medieval Serbian towns. Its creation was the result of the population concentration in the immediate vicinity of the precious metal mine. The fortification was built on a strategically dominant place that consisted of the Upper and the Lower Town. The town settlement was placed somewhat further downwards and, most probably protected by trenches and palisade. Within the town settlement, at an important crossroad there was a square, surrounded by houses of domestic and foreign merchants, shops, business houses, trade workshops. The houses were grouped in town quarters.

The Turks had finally conquered Novo Brdo in 1455. Upon conquering of the town, they repaired it for a long time, maintaining and further advancing the fortification. The urban tissue was neither destroyed nor changed significantly. Only St. Nikola's Cathedral was transformed into a mosque. The mine, melting plant and the mint continued to work. Trade, crafts and other activities developed as in the previous epoch. The characteristically oriental type structures that could be discerned were the public bathroom (hammam), and the Islamic religious structures. The urban culture had been advanced by paving the streets with stone and by the long-distance water provision.

By the middle of the 17th century, the town gradually got deserted and lost its importance. That is a probable reason why the urban tissue of the town had not undergone significant changes (Figure 1).

Adaptation of the existing model which was adjusted to the requirements of the oriental way of life

Novi Pazar is for the first time mentioned in 1461, parallel with its medieval name. We can almost surely suppose today that in the pre-Turkish era, in the medieval period, there was a settlement on this place, which functioned as a marketplace. The central area of this marketplace was a square grouped around a church. This church had, according to the customs of the Islamic conquerors, been transformed into a mosque. This medieval commercial settlement was, as it seems, in the initial phase of its formation, in the vicinity of two villages (Parice and Potok) which, in the Turkish period were incorporated into the settlement. It was created as a typical medieval linear settlement alongside an important

3 Gardel, L.: La cite musulmane, vie sociale et politique, Paris 1976

16 spatium
communication road to Constantinopolis (later Istanbul). The commercial centre - charshia was identified with its medieval form situated on the left bank of the Raška river. Immediately upon Turkish conquering, Novi Pazar started growing on the right bank of river as well, next to the fortification made of wood and stone. The fortress was in the lowest hierarchical level, a palanka, which guarded the road, independently from the settlement. The housing zones, mahalas, surrounded the commercial importance because the army used it for conquering Bosnia. Novi Pazar, as palanka, primarily had a military character, but soon after conquering Bosnia in 1436 it became an important commercial place on the crossroad of several caravan roads. At that time the medieval elements of the market were adjusted and adapted to the elements characteristic for oriental architecture (the church was transformed into mosque; hans, hammams and bezistan were added). Novi Pazar became an

centre, completely in compliance with the oriental urban planning.

A question can be posed as to why was this area chosen for developing a new city in an oriental pattern, and not at a medieval marketplace model, only several kilometres away from the place which the Turks had conquered previously. The answer is that the position of the marketplace in the space did not meet their requirements so that the Turks stopped developing this settlement. This was still a period during which the Turks, after the conquer, were tolerant towards the religion of the inhabitants, so that the physical form and the social structure of the inhabitants changed only slowly. This can be testified by the stagnation phase through which, Prizren had undergone from 1459 until the mid 16th century. This was the period during which the Turks introduced and strengthened their rule and administrative activities.

Based on the time when one of the oldest mosque in the town was erected, Suzychelebia mosque in 1513, which was already surrounded by a small housing quarter-mahala, it can be supposed that the part of the town created under the oriental influence originally had been built further away from the medieval

The very old city of Prizren experienced a sudden development in the 14th century, which led to the definition of tree zones of urban contents that also cover certain periods in the development. The oldest part of the town was formed by shaping a group around a non-fortified settlement with the Episcopal centre of Bogorodica Ljeviška church as the dominant structure. Then the fortification with the outsirting belt was formed on the top of the hill, while the marketplace was created during the third phase, on the side of the fortification. The creation of all these three phases is related to some parts of the town directed towards the Bistrica river which flows through and which had changed its course.

The Turks conquered Prizren in 1455, or 1459, depending on sources, which means much later than other towns in the southern parts of the former dismembered Serbian State. All they could find was a neglected town even though only a century earlier, in 14th century, it flourished.

Upon conquering of Prizren, the Turks constructed one minor mosque that is today known as Krk-mosque. "Krk-gazija" as a combination of the Turkish and Arab language means a soldier who proved his glory in the battle, which suggests that the mosque was built immediately upon taking over of the Prizren, as a token of a glorious victory. Its location, in the plain, not very distanced from the medieval settlement and the Episcopal centre confirms the Turkish custom to form a settlement next to the existing one. This can be testified by the stagnation phase through which, Prizren had undergone from 1459 until the mid 16th century. This was the period during which the Turks introduced and strengthened their rule and administrative activities.

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The town of Prizren, went into Turkish hands in a very good shape in the topographic terms, since it was a developed settlement positioned so as to be controlled from the Bistrica river. The settlement developed next to the river and a fertile plane, along the road to big centres such as Skopje, Skadar and Priština.

Keeping all these element and continuing their further development, adjusting it to their needs, the Turks paid a special attention to the fortress "Kaljaja". By using the inherited fortress, strictly for military purposes, the Turks managed to get such necessary structures without any great efforts.

The outskirts, which had developed in the previous period, during the Turkish rule remained settled by Christian inhabitants. This indicates the name of mahala - Varoš, which is territorially identical with the former medieval outskirting (Figure 3).

**Formation of a completely new settlement**

The settlement constructed accordingly to principles of the oriental type towns is Nova Varoš, in 16th century - originally Skender-Pasha Palanka. The reason for this foundation can be found in the Kanun-nami of the Bosnian Sandzak from 1516 in which it says: "The varoš which were founded by Skender-pasha, Firus-beg and Janus-pacha for protection of roads for soldiers from Novi Pazar and Sjenica...should be populated with 20 soldiers which...The road leading from Bosnia to Istanbul, the river Bistrica and the greenery all around are very favourable pre-conditions for foundation of a settlement". As the palanka already existed, charshia was formed alongside of the main road linearly. The most favourable plateau was aimed for a mosque and for other public structures around, with mahalas of the oldest Turkish families gathered around. In this way these mahalas were completely separated from the mahalas with Christian population situated in the steep and unfavourable terrain. This division was very persistent despite the arrival of a substantial number of Christian population due to the trading business. The religious division that conditioned the global urban planning is losses its importance when we consider micro-locations. The scheme of the street network is similar in all mahalas and consists of the street directions perpendicular to the main road and the isohypsas of the terrain. By even smaller streets and dead-ends it is possible to reach the centre of the mahala. The basic principle of the oriental urban planning is applied by: the provision of views to all housing structures, greenery and flowing water for pleasure and water disposal. The settlement is cut by the charshia which runs alongside the road, used for caravan transportation. It represents a very common type of smaller fortresses (palanka) used for road protection and necessary for settlements trading activities (Figure 4).

**CONCLUSIONS**

The above-mentioned examples lead us to the conclusion that the knowledge acquired on the changes in conception of the settlement territory of Serbia during the late Middle Age can be best achieved by comparative research of the elements characteristic for the medieval and oriental settlements types.

The main difference lies in the approach to formation of a settlement. As a rule, all medieval settlements in Serbia were founded in accordance to certain well considered reasons (strategically good topographic position, intersection of two or more important roads, etc.). However, they were also the result of a long adjustment period to certain social and political conditions. The medieval history...
has shown that in certain areas people always showed interest for the same places, having been aware of the fact that these particular places were the best and the most favourable. That is why the settlements dating from 15th and 16th centuries were very complex and multi-layered, with structures built in different epochs, of different value and belonging to different owners.

With the arrival of the Turks, a unique rule was gradually being imposed over a large territory. The settlements were strictly systematised according to size, number of inhabitants, their religion and character of the settlement (the fortified places were palanka, hisar and kale; the open settlements were veroš, casaba and šeher). There was a clear hierarchy in the status of the settlement in the country related to the construction of the necessary structures (which type of mosque, how many bezistans depending on the number of the inhabitants, etc.). In this early period of the Turkish rule the conquered territory constantly grew, so that there was no need for settlement to be fortified since there was no fear of enemy.

The existing settlements were places of religious tolerance, a state which will changed in the period to come. The urban tissue had undergone gradual changes; the streets were adapted to the new forms of life. The mosques, around which the housing quarters were grouped (mahale), had to be visible as markers, but there was no huge space around them for gatherings. They could even be within some housing block complex. The main urban triad, mosque, han and hammam were built within trade and commercial complex, charshia, and then the same structure could be built elsewhere in the settlement depending on the needs of the inhabitants.

Considering the different types of the settlements from 15th and 16th century, though not in detail, we can notice that there is a great similarity in the elements that create the urban planning of medieval settlements and oriental settlements (type of the streets, etc.). However the complete appearance of the settlement gradually changed. This was the result of spiritual rather than physical needs imposed by the new culture of life in the towns.

References


